

Message Text

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ORIGIN EUR-03

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /004 R

66605

DRAFTED BY EUR:MNHUGUES:GMD

APPROVED BY EUR:MNHUGHES

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O 071550Z JUN 75

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO USMISSION NATO IMMEDIATE

CINCLANT

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 133577

FOLLOWING REPEAT PONTA DELGADA 181 ACTION SECSTATE LISBON
COMUSFORAZ JUN 6.

QUOTE: C O N F I D E N T I A L PONTA DELGADA 181

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PO

SUBJECT: SEPARATIST ACTIVITY IN AZORES.

REF: (A) PONTA DELGADA 178

(B) PONTA DELGADA 163

SITREP 1:62200Z

1. MILITARY GOVERNOR OF AZORES HAS TAKEN OVER ADMINISTRATION OF
PONTA DELGADA DISTRICT AFTER MAJOR SEPERATIST DEMONSTRATION FORCED
RESIGNATION OF LEFTIST DISTRICT GOVERNOR ANTONIO BORGES
COUTINHO.

2. DEMONSTRATION HAD ORIGINALLY BEEN CALLED BY LOCAL FARMER
ASSOCIATION TO PROTEST NEW GOVERNMENT AGRICULTURAL PRICE
SCHEDULE CONSIDERED DISCRIMINATORY BY AZOREANS (REF A). ISSUE
HAD BECOME LINKED TO THAT OF AZOREAN SEPERATISM, GIVING
DEMONSTRATION DEFINITE POLITICAL OVERTONES. IT GENERALLY BELIEVED
PRIOR TO DEMONSTRATION THAT FLA INTENDED USE IT AS MEANS SHOWING
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POPULAR SUPPORT FOR SEPARATISM. IN JOINT COMMUNIQUE JUNE 4,

BORGES COUTINHO AND MILITARY GOVERNOR PINTO MAGALHAES HAD ORDERED POSTPONEMENT OF DEMONSTRATION, CITING POSSIBLE INTERFERENCE WITH PORT VISIT OF NATO STAVLANT SAME DAY.

3. DEMONSTRATION, OBSERVED BY CONSOFF, BEGAN WITH MARCH THROUGH PONTA DELGADA. CROWD OF ABOUT 1000 MARCHERS REFLECTED ALL SOCIO-ECONOMIC GROUPS; PERHAPS 40 PERCENT FARMERS, REMAINDER OFFICE WORKERS, PROFESSIONALS. LARGE NUMBER OF PPD AND PSP BUTTONS IN EVIDENCE. ABOUT 50 PERCENT OF NUMEROUS BANNERS CARRIED BY MARCHERS DEALT WITH AGRICULTURAL ISSUE, REMAINDER WITH SEPERATISM. CITY SHOPS CLOSED IN SUPPORT OF DEMONSTRATION AND MANY OBSERVERS JOINED MARCH AS IT PROCEEDED. LOCAL AUTHORITIES MADE NO ATTEMPT STOP MARCH.

4. MARCH FOLLOWED BY OCCUPATION CIVIL GOVERNORS PALACE AND SUBSEQUENT RALLY. SPEAKERS AT RALLY ALL KNOWN TO HAVE BEEN MAPA SUPPORTERS AND SUSPECTED OF MEMBERSHIP IN FLA. SPEAKERS DEMANDED RESIGNATION OF CIVIL GOVERNOR AND HIS REPLACEMENT BY COLONEL RENATO MIRANDA (REF B) REPLACEMENT LEFTIST RADIO ANNOUNCER BY CONSULATE EMPLOYEE VICTOR CRUZ (FORMER ANNOUNCER), REPLACEMENT OF LEFTIST MEMBERS DISTRICT CITY COUNCIL ADMINISTRATIVE COMMISSIONS BY PPD AND PSP MEMBERS, AND REPLACEMENT OF CONTINENTAL OFFICERS SERVING IN AZORES BY AZOREANS. SPEECHES INTERRUPTED BY FREQUENT CALLS FOR INDEPENDENCE FROM CROWD.

5. AT 1600 HOURS LOCAL, POPULAR MILITARY GOVERNOR MAGALHAES APPEARED AND ADDRESSED CROWD. HE PROMISED THAT RPICE SCHEDULE WOULD BE REVISED AND CALLED FOR CALM, UNITY WITH ARMED FORCES MOVEMENT. CROWD REPLIED WITH CALLS FOR INDEPENDENCE, REMOVAL OF GOVERNOR. AFTER MAGALHAES LEFT, AZOREAN FLAG HOISTED OVER GOVERNORS PALACE.

6. TWENTY MINUTES LATER, MAGALHAES RE-APPEARED ACCOMPANIED BY BORGES COUTINHO. IN SHORT SPEECH, BORGES COUTINHO STATED THAT HE HAD SUBMITTED RESIGNATION TO MILITARY GOVERNOR, THAT RESIGNATION HAD BEEN ACCEPTED, AND THAT MILITARY GOVERNOR HAD TAKEN OVER ADMINISTRATION OF DISTRICT PENDING APPOINTMENT OF NEW CIVIL GOVERNOR.

7. FOLLOWING BORGES COUTINHO ANNOUNCEMENT, JUBILANT CROWD SEIZED
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STATE RADIO STATION. SMALL GROUP PORTUGUESE SAILORS SUBSEQUENTLY SENT TO REMOVE DEMONSTRATORS BUT, SEEING IMPOSSIBILITY OF TASK, RETIRED.

8. TODAYS EVENTS MAJOR VICTORY FOR SEPERATISTS. THEY NOW THE MAJOR POLITICAL FORCE ON SAO MIGUEL AND HAVE MOMENTUM ON THEIR SIDE. SIGNIFICANTLY, THEY HAVE DEMONSTRATED BROAD SPECTRUM OF SUPPORT, INCLUDING SOCIALISTS AND RURAL WORKING CLASS. IN

ADDITION, NEITHER LEFTIST OR LOCAL AUTHORITIES, INCLUDING MILITARY,
SERIOUSLY ATTEMPTED STOP THEM.
PFEIFLE UNQUOTE KISSINGER

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: SECESSION, AZORES, CIVIL DISORDERS, POLITICAL SITUATION, PERSONNEL RESIGNATIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 07 JUN 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: ShawDG
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975STATE133577
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: MNHUGUES:GMD
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750200-0046
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750670/aaaaclqb.tel
Line Count: 118
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ORIGIN EUR
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 75 PONTA DELGADA 178
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: ShawDG
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 16 APR 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <16 APR 2003 by ElyME>; APPROVED <22 DEC 2003 by ShawDG>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
06 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: SEPARATIST ACTIVITY IN AZORES.
TAGS: PINT, PO, (COUTINHO, ANTONIO BORGES)
To: NATO BRUSSELS CINCLANT
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006